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FARM EDUCATION.

From HARPER'S WEEKLY.

A. I. C. P. Notes.

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VACANT CITY LOT FARMS.

In the summer of 1894, when more persons than usual were out of employment on account of the hard times, Mayor Pingree of Detroit, conceived the idea that vacant land in and near the city could be cultivated by the poor unemployed, whereby subsistence could be obtained for the winter. A Committee was appointed, several thousand acres of land were offered, but for lack of funds only 430 acres (8760 city lots) were accepted. This land was plowed, harrowed and staked into lots of quarter to half acre each. Seed and tools were furnished by the Committee. 945 families received plots of land, which were cultivated under the direction of a volunteer Superintendent. The above are the outlines of the "Potato Patch Farms," or the "Detroit Experiment," as it has been termed.*

This success of this trial, in which, at an expense of \$3.60 each to the Mayor's Committee, nearly one thousand families were enabled to support themselves through the winter by their potato crops alone, was brought to the attention of Mr. Bolton Hall, a son of the Rev. Dr. John Hall, in 1895. Realizing that the scheme not only sustained the workers, but trained them and relieved the charities from the strain of constant applications, he secured the co-operation of Mr. N. S. Rosenau of

**Detroit
Idea.**

**New York
Conference
of
Charities.**

* Full reports may be had by writing to Mayor Pingree.

the United Hebrew Charities, Mr. C. D. Kellogg of the Charity Organization Society, and Mr. R. Fulton Cutting. Through their influence, the subject was brought before the monthly Conference of Charities, and subsequently before the Federation of East Side Workers.

After the matter had been thoroughly discussed it was decided that a new organization was not needed, so it was determined to place the management in the hands of some large philanthropic society for the sake of utilizing its experience and machinery. The Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor was accordingly asked to assume the management, under the condition that its President should be Chairman of the Vacant Lot Committee.

Committee.

A Committee was appointed, consisting of Mr. R. Fulton Cutting; Mr. Jacob H. Schiff; Mr. Thomas M. Mulry, of St. Vincent de Paul Society; Mr. Nathaniel S. Rosenau, of the United Hebrew Charities; Mr. Arthur W. Milbury, of the Industrial Christian Alliance; Mr. Bolton Hall; Mr. Francis V. Green, of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor; Mr. George Calder, of St. Andrew's Society, and Mr. William H. Tolman.

On the organization of the Committee the following officers were elected: President, Mr. R. Fulton Cutting; Treasurer, Mr. Jacob H. Schiff; Secretary, Mr. Wm. H. Tolman; Executive Committee, Mr. Bolton Hall, Chairman, Mr. A. W. Milbury and Mr. W. H. Tolman. The original idea was that vacant lots in the city proper should be cultivated, but this plan was abandoned on account of the expense of watching, particularly as the plots of land were so isolated. The Committee, therefore, availed themselves of land in Long Island City, comprised in three large tracts, of 138 acres (1656 city lots, altogether), and donated by Mr. Wm. Steinway, Mrs. John Lowry, Mr. H. B. Hollins and the Long Island Improvement Co. The Superintendent reported this land as well adapted for cultivation.

Plan and Scope.

An appeal for money to carry on the work was then issued, in which it was clearly stated that the cultivation of the city lots by the unemployed was

not a mere charity, but a relief scheme which aimed to establish habits of self-reliance, to teach the poor to become prosperous, to make farming more profitable and to increase the sum of wealth, and that it was the opinion of the Committee that hundreds of families who would otherwise be a burden to the taxpayers and to the charitable could be made self-supporting at a cost of less than \$10 each, help being given, where possible, as a loan. The plan, therefore, embraced a means of providing immediate work on a business basis for all unemployed, however unskilled, who might be willing and capable.

Funds came in slowly, probably because the charitable failed to recognize at once that this was a substitute for many charities rather than a supplement to one. This lack however resulted in part in the healthy development of the Co-operative Farm, which bore its own expenses.

Our main work and much of our expense of the year was devoted to the effort to call public attention, not only in the United States, but all over the world, to what could be done with Vacant land, and how it should be done. Considering that our city is a receiving basin for poverty and failures from all over the country, the large number of cities which were induced to undertake similar enterprises form a sufficient justification of the large expenses, even upon selfish grounds. Capt. Cornelius Gardener, to whose energy and capacity, freely devoted to his fellow citizens, the success of the Detroit "Potato Patches" in 1894 was largely due, wrote to us that until New York began to agitate the matter, neither public notice of their success nor funds to continue it could be had, the papers refusing to publish his articles, but that upon the announcement that a New York Committee was appointed, the same papers offered liberal pay, and he was overwhelmed with requests for full details from leading publications. Thus we repaid our social debt to Detroit.

Many others, as for instance Minneapolis, were decided, by our determination, to push the matter, and some, like Detroit, made a city appropriation in order later to relieve their poor fund. The large file of newspaper clippings, open to those who are interested, at the office of the Association shows the

**Object
Lesson for
the Entire
Country.**

**Other
Cities.**

extraordinary educational value of our work in riveting public attention on the essentials of true charity.

The Association advanced a thousand dollars for seed, tools, fertilizer and superintendence, engaging the services of J. W. Kelgaard, a practical farmer, who had made a special study for the Association in connection with the causes of agricultural depression in New York State. The Superintendent at once purchased seed potatoes, and prepared the land for cultivation.

**Application
Stations.**

Application stations were then opened under the care of various societies in different parts of the city. In assignments, preference was given to men with families, as it was a part of the plan that the cultivation of the soil should tide a man over till he could get a permanent position. For the sake of conclusions at the end of the season, inquiries were made of each applicant in accordance with the following schedule :

Date _____

REMARKS

After the schedule was satisfactorily filled out, the applicant was directed to meet the Superintendent, who assigned the land on presentation of this card :

<p>To the Superintendent.</p> <p><i>Appointment with.....</i></p> <p><i>Address.....</i></p> <p><i>Endorsed by.....</i></p> <p><i>Number in family capable of work.....</i></p> <p><i>Experience in farming in months.....</i></p> <p><i>Can pay for supplies (yes or no).....</i></p> <p><i>Date.....</i></p> <p><i>Application Station at.....</i></p>	<p><i>Application No.</i></p> <p><i>Secretary of the Committee.</i></p>
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**Distrust of
Plan.**

Applications for land were received very slowly indeed, as the people seemed to distrust the scheme, from fear lest in some way the promised advantages were to be taken away from them after a season's hard work ; however, after the crops began to appear above ground, applications were received at the

rate of 40 or 50 a day. One result of the tardy applications was that the Committee found it had about 40 acres ready for cultivation but unassigned. As we were then out of funds, this land was used as a Co-operative Farm. 84 families, representing 261 people, received allotments. The average farm was an acre, but in cases of extreme poverty, or where the applicant had a practical knowledge of farming, the amount was increased. The Committee insisted that half the land at least should be planted with potatoes, because the risk of this crop was small. The Superintendent was aided by two assistants, so that the scheme was practically a farm school. This instruction, the plowing of the ground, tools and fertilizer were furnished without charge to the applicants.

**Farm
School.**

It should be stated at the outset, that the entire work here was experimental, hence only the close of the season could determine success or failure. It should also be stated that the work was freely criticised; some of the criticisms were extremely captious, but as those who were so generous in this direction offered no solution of the difficulties in the way, the Committee persevered in the policy which it had marked out. All experience must be paid for, the best sometimes proving the most costly. The Committee, therefore, begins the season of 1896 rich in experience, whereby the expenses for the coming season can be lessened and the yield vastly increased. Its expenses will always be heavy, from the fact that these farms are situated across the river, and that the additional expenses of the ferry are considerable; that the ignorance of the applicants compels minute inspection, and that the cultivation is on scientific principles.

Criticism.

Although, with proper fertilizers and great care, as much as eight hundred bushels of potatoes have been raised on a single acre, we think it would be better to give less land to potatoes and more to early vegetables, and that all expenses should be repaid by the cultivators from the sale of their crops or by their labor.

**Labor
Wages.**

F. B. Livezey, of Sykesville, Md., who believes in Farm Reform as a panacea, writes, "The truck farmers around Paris pay an average of \$126 per acre rent for land, and yet



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their support ; that the needy are thereby assisted, without creating the demoralization in the habits of the people that gratuitous aid always entails, and that much relief and real help may by this plan be afforded with small expense to charitable persons or to taxpayers." Thus as a "labor test" this plan is unexcelled. Here is an opportunity for honest, moderate and not unpleasant work, and for learning a useful rural occupation ; any who are able but will not work should not be helped at all. It is easier to get the people back to the land than the land back to the people.

**Natural
Labor Test.**

To show the practical effect of this enterprise we mention two illustrations from the report of the "Doe Ye Nexte Thing Society" for work among the poor :—"A sad instance of illness and starvation was brought to our notice last winter in the case of a man who had been unable to find work of any kind, and who, therefore, with his sick wife and four children, passed two whole days literally without a morsel of food. Their rooms were scrupulously clean, but so devoid of the bare necessities of life that there were even no sheets on the bed where the sick woman lay, and the starving children had scarcely rags to cover them."* Temporary aid was given and the husband, worn almost to a skeleton from want of food, and unavailing efforts to find work, was started in farming in the spring, on one of the vacant lots on Long Island, where he worked faithfully during the summer, and has now a position in this city at \$18.00 a month."

**Illustrative
Cases.**

Another family is found in the most disheartening material and moral destitution. "Work was found for the woman, at \$4.00 a week, in the house of a lady who took great interest in her. She came regularly to the Bible Class, and all through the summer her husband worked steadily on the vacant farms of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, on Long Island, on which he raised enough vegetables both to provide food for his family during that time, and to have a small stock in reserve for the coming winter. With more comfortable rooms and better surroundings, this family can now look forward with more hopefulness to the future." Such instances could be

* Annual Report of the D. Y. N. T. Society for Work among the Poor. 1894-1895.

many times multiplied ; but it is easy to see that, while conflicting with no charities, the Vacant Lot Cultivation will become a valuable auxiliary to them by helping to solve the problem of how to find work for the shiftless and unskilled. Encouraged by the number of other cities which followed our lead last year, we venture to make the following additional suggestions for extending the work, both in their hands and our own.

**Business
Basis.**

The Cultivation of Vacant Lots must be put on a business basis. Volunteer service in superintendence must be secured and the aid of the city authorities availed of to the fullest extent. As an additional Charity, it will in the end be a failure. As an educator and a natural social development it can do, and under wide minded guidance will do, permanent and incalculable good. In future years it will be found that many philanthropists will refuse to contribute to miscellaneous charities until this plan is in operation in their district. It is best to get tracts of as many acres as possible in a piece, and if the land is poor, to collect the sweepings of the street to be carted upon the land in the spring or carried upon the land, from time to time, as collected, to enrich the soil. The cultivation being intensive, the people would carry the manure upon the land themselves, if it were given to them. At any rate, the collection of fertilizer will furnish some work during the winter months. A careful account should be kept with each cultivator, of all seed, fertilizer, and his *pro rata* share of the expense of superintendence, and so forth. This, except in cases of misfortune, can easily be, and should be, repaid to the Committee out of the produce of the " farms," or by labor expended on the co-operative branch, so as to eliminate entirely " alms " giving.

BUT WHAT WERE WE TO DO WITH
THOSE WHO NEEDED IMMEDIATE SUPPORT, WHO COULD NOT WAIT
FOR CROPS TO GROW ?

**Farm
Profit
Sharing.**

We plowed up and seeded about 38 acres and gave all workers ten cents an hour.

We think that too high a rate, but it must be remembered that we have the very poorest, to whom we should have had to give necessities, if we had not been able to let them have the opportunity of earning them at once.

In addition the workers were told that they were to have a half interest in the product of these acres. Although this was not begun till far too late for the best results; when the crops were gathered, we found that the expense on this Co-operative farm was \$966.75, and the value of the crops, which were disposed of to the various charities, at market rates was \$1067.65. After deducting an allowance for rent of land, cost of superintendence and interest there was left \$53 to be divided among the workers. It is the opinion of the Executive Committee that this feature should be made the main one; as it stimulated the men to friendly rivalry, created a public spirit against loafing, and whilst affording immediate wages to the cultivators, can be made to contribute largely toward the other expenses of the Committee.

Co-operation.

Where the scheme is already familiar to the workers, the plots small and the soil not too hard, there seems to be no reason why the able bodied workers themselves should not spade the land instead of having it plowed by the Committee. When it is known that all direct aid is to be paid for by work or by part of the crop, most men will prefer to do as much of their own work as possible.

The Christian Industrial Alliance meal tickets will support a family of three for a week at a cost of ninety cents. These might be given in wages for work. The outlay is small, since men living so cheaply can afford to work cheap. If more apply than can be employed, of course those who are most in need, and will therefore work cheapest, should have the preference.

Even if the Committee should have to pay a rental, based not on speculative value, but on what the land is worth for use, it would be a profitable investment to the taxpayers; and as many cultivators would pay market rent for the land in later years, it would also benefit the land-owners themselves.

Philanthropy and Five Per Cent.

Our experience has already shown that men will generally work when given the opportunity; that hardly any capital is necessary for employment, and that over-population in this country is as chimerical as the exhaustion of the coal supply. Its bearing upon the questions of temperance and wages

**Reasons for
Failure.**

will appear at a glance, since one, at least, of the cultivators who did best had been an absolute drunkard. Where the plan has failed in any city, it can be traced directly to three causes: 1. "That well-founded distrust of everything that looks like charity," which, to quote Mrs. Lowell, has been such a safeguard of the poor. This has kept workers from offering themselves, until a year's trial with a few has convinced them. 2. Active speculation in suburban lands, which made it impossible to get the use of lots. 3. Lack of ability in the Managers, who failed to arrange, for instance, to get lands further out and shelter the workers.

Some of the cultivators who kept count of the number of days they worked, show the surprising conclusion that they earned, not farm wages (75 cents per day with board and lodging for the worker), but skilled mechanics' wages, \$4.00 per day, for every working day: as, for instance, a stone cutter worked 50 hours and made \$120.23. (See table, page 40.) The light work was afterwards done by his children, but as this could not have brought any income otherwise, he did not count it. Several families, encouraged by their experience, have already moved out to the country. It is to be regretted that more accurate and extensive figures on this point were not kept.

**Margin of
Profit.**

The statement has been made by many, including gentlemen farmers, that if such results can be demonstrated again they will go into the business, that "potato raising is pretty profitable." Again, it must be borne in mind that in addition to potatoes other crops were raised. The fact that the crops were sold at retail rates and that the product was choice, increased the rates. Many a planter was able to peddle his bunch of radishes, picked only a few hours previously, carefully put up, and a fine product, for five or six cents, whereas the wholesale price at market rate was only two and a half or three cents. The same was true of potatoes, which were sold in many instances by the quart or half-peck. Had the planter sold his entire crop of four or eight barrels at one time, he would only have received wholesale rates, and a large measure of the profit would have gone into the hands of the commission merchants. Too much stress cannot be laid upon the fact that those who made the most money were those who cultivated

the finest product ; proof that it was fine was afforded by the fact that the second prize at the New York City Live Stock Show was awarded to the exhibit of the Vacant Lot Farms.

**Second
Prize.**

In the economic judgment of the Vacant Lot Farm managers it must be carefully borne in mind that everything was given the farmers : the use of the land and of tools, seed, fertilizer and instruction. Economically, an injustice is done to farmers who are obliged to calculate very closely the above items of expense, but the Committee felt that the small number of farmers on the Vacant Lot Farms would not do any appreciable injustice to the other classes, and that even for this, the increased supply of skilled farm labor would more than compensate. Were the Vacant Lot Farmers not at work on the land, they would have been on the lists of the Association for charity, which would have meant the bestowal of money or shelter, food, fuel or clothing. Suppose \$35 were given each family ; at the expiration of a few weeks, the money would have been spent and the family in question be in as bad condition as before, if not worse, because the inclination for self help might have been weakened by the granting of relief. On the Vacant Lot Farms, however, the farmers worked with a zest because they knew that they were to have the whole fruit of their labors, and they recognized that their efforts would produce results, because of the careful training.

**Relief by
Work.**

Subscriptions for the expenses of the coming year (which have already begun in the fertilizing of the ground with street sweepings turned over by Colonel Waring) are earnestly invited. Whatever is repaid by the cultivators will go to get land to make permanent occupation for involuntary idlers. The use of land for the season, especially on Manhattan Island or in the district just above the Harlem is also greatly needed.

Surely this experience may point the way out of a social crisis so grave that even the Prebendary of St. Paul, Rev. Dr. Eyton, says, "What the next chapter (in our history) will bring forth no one can tell. It may be red as blood and confused as chaos." "There is trouble on all sides," says the famous preacher of Italy, Agnostio di Monterfetro ; "the horizon is black with clouds." The Bishop of Winchester adds, "The zones of enormous wealth

**Social
Crisis.**

and degraded poverty, unless carefully considered, will generate a tornado."

Warnings. Such warnings are not wanting among ourselves. Strikes, business paralysis, political corruption, crimes of violence, social degeneration and increasing difficulty of making a living are the evils which, with a growing class of men, wanting work but unable to find it, threaten ourselves and our children. As long as United States soldiers will shoot rioters, we need not greatly fear actual insurrection, unless, indeed, a foreign war should leave a discontented trained soldiery of our own on our hands, but in one form or another the idle man is still the dangerous one, and the more intelligent and willing to exert himself he is, the more terrible he becomes. If we could but find a place for employing such men during the winter as efficiently as the Vacant City Lots could employ them during the summer, we would have gone far towards solving at once the LABOR QUESTION and the problem of UNDESERVED PAUPERISM.

The following is the detailed statement of the Committee's own plot :

EXPENSES OF THE CO-OPERATIVE FARM.

Seed, tools and labor.....	\$984 75
Less fertilizer on hand.....	18 00
Total cost.....	<u>\$966 75</u>

RECEIPTS.

Produce sold to Seaside Home.....	\$103 50
Sold to Relief Department at market prices :	
606 bushels potatoes.....	424 20
2840 heads of cabbage.....	142 00
130 crates of tomatoes.....	130 00
173 barrels turnips.....	155 70
Sold to Convent Good Shepherd.....	22 65
" " St. Joseph's Asylum.....	7 50
" " Mt. Sinai Hospital.....	3 00
" " Governor's Island.....	4 10
Seed-beans on hand.....	75 00
Total.....	<u>\$1,067 65</u>

STATEMENT OF THE ASSIGNED PLOTS.

In arriving at the value of the general crops, it should be stated that each planter was required to report to the Superintendent every day the amount taken from his farm and the receipts for the same. The value of the crops was estimated at the current market rates.

Amount of Crops.

Potatoes, 6,235 bushels.	Tomatoes, 530 crates.
Peas, 817 bushels.	Corn, 1000 dozen.
Beans, 1259 bushels.	Fodder corn (not counted).
Beans for seed, 50 bushels.	Turnips, 1400 bushels.
Cabbages, 19,119 heads.	Carrots, 93 bushels.
Lettuce, onions, radishes—Lowry Farm, \$1,130.15.	
Lettuce, onions, radishes—Ravenswood Farm, \$1,702.54.	

The unitemized report of the last-named vegetables is due to the fact that we supposed at first that such small things would amount to but little, and that much of them was taken away in very small quantities or consumed on the ground, so they were "lumped."

STATEMENT OF VACANT LOT ACCOUNT.

RECEIPTS.

Through Jacob H. Schiff, Treasurer.....	\$2,580 65
From R. Fulton Cutting.....	200 00
“ Wm. E. Dodge.....	100 00
“ Percy R. Pyne, Jr.....	100 00
“ Wm. E. Bond.....	50 00
“ Francis V. Greene.....	50 00
“ Sale of Products.....	992 15
“ Beans (seed).....	75 00
“ A. I. C. P.....	673 93
	<hr/>
	\$4,821 73

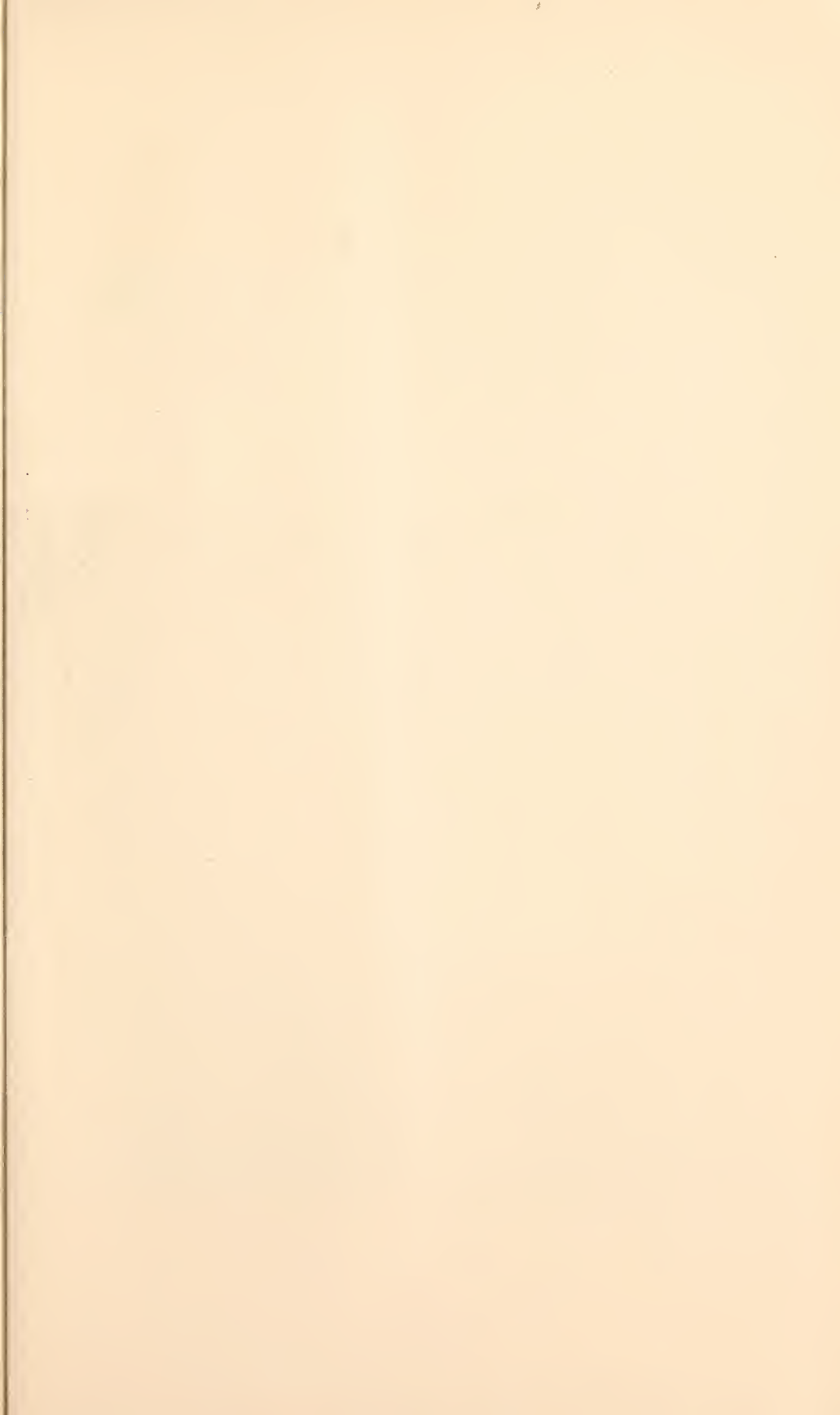
EXPENDITURES.

Superintendence, labor, seed, tools, fertilizers, ferriage, cartage, printing and postage.....	\$4,821 73
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MONEY VALUE OF CROPS.

Planters' Plots.....	\$5,970 82
Co-operative Farm.....	1,067 65
Ravenswood Farm.....	1,702 54
Lowry Farm.....	1,130 15
	<hr/>
	\$9,871 16

In striking a balance, it must be remembered that no rent was paid, and in addition, the instruction, seed, tools, fertilizer and preparation of the soil were supplied free.





FROM HARTER'S WEEKS

FARM SETTLEMENT.

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The following report of the Superintendent to the Committee presents a general view of the scheme with details and incidents from his view point :

The work of our farms began at all hours. Some of these people had some work or chance of work during the day and would come over and work on the farms in the afternoon or evening ; others would come over early in the morning, before their regular work ; others mornings and evenings ; others had irregular days, just as they had the time to spare ; others were there all the time. Those who were unable to secure any work, spent nearly the whole of their time on their farms. All of them seemed to be endued with wonderful earnestness. Ignorant as they were of farming and farm work, they made up by zeal for their lack of knowledge, and watched the tender shoots as they came from the ground with the glee of a child finding a new toy. Each plant received the care almost as though it were a child itself.

**Farm
Hours.**

Being called to a certain planter's lot one day, he said some one was stealing his cabbage. I went over his cabbage plot and could find none missing, but he was very much exercised and declared that his cabbage was being stolen. I said, " Why, I do not see any cabbage stolen ; all the plants are here." " Yes, but see here," said he, stooping and showing from the under part of several plants where a leaf had been broken off. His care over each plant was so close that he missed even a leaf.

**Cabbage
Culture.**

The men who operated the farms were not of the class that are looking for charity ; most of them were men who had once occupied good positions, but through force of circumstances had gotten among the rocks, did not know how to extricate themselves, and took hold of this as a new hope.

When we remember that these poor people left a cheerless home in the morning and were willing to work on these lots all through the day (looking to the harvest for their reward) and return to homes just as cheerless in the night, sometimes with no food and hungry children looking to them for bread, some of them so poor that they could not pay their ferriage, there will be no question raised as to their need.

**Tenement
Homes.**

The Vacant Lot Farms were a phase of charity that was new, inasmuch as it put these people in a position where they did something for their self-support, and so could maintain their self-respect. The majority of them were anxious, at the close of the experiment, to go to the country and take hold of agriculture in a true and permanent way.

**Cooperative
Farm.**

An interesting feature of the Vacant Lot Farms was what we called the Co-operative Farm. This farm was conducted entirely by the planters of the other farms, the only difference being that on the Co-operative Farm they were to pay back all expenses and divide the remaining profits, the idea being not only to help these people but to find out if co-operative farming would pay. We started late in June with about forty men, some of them hale, strapping fellows. Six secured work shortly after and left. The older ones, the infirm and those who on account of their physical disabilities were not able to go out and secure positions, were left on our hands to carry on the Co-operative work. Notwithstanding the fact that this class of labor was unable to do in three days what a good man would do in one, the Co-operative Farm, I am glad to say, was a success.

There were many touching as well as amusing instances in our farm work. Some had the idea, and it was hard to get them over it, that the more seed they put in the ground, the more crops they would raise. They went on the principle that if two eyes would make a dozen potatoes a hundred ought to make a hundred dozen potatoes.

**Intensive
Farming.**

Each man was very careful that no one trespassed on his lot, and was also very careful that every bit of space was fully utilized. It was intensive farming on the closest scale. One man, a stone cutter, with five days' hard work by himself and two daughters (making fifteen days in all), took from his lot \$120. Another, who lived in a large tenement house in New York, was an expert gardener and was given nearly four acres of land, moved over to the neighborhood of the farms, rented a small house, and made \$430. He and his wife spent their whole time on the land, and were always careful to have one crop succeed another. One woman, whose husband was working for a small wage, in her

desire to help to improve their condition, took one of the lots and did all the work herself ; not only this, but dug the weeds from lots of some of the other planters, dried them in the sun and placed the ashes around her growing crops, thus making a high grade fertilizer out of that which before was doing harm.

We had one man who had been an habitual drunkard. He was always being sent to jail for five or ten days as an old drunk. He applied for a lot, and one of the police officers said that if the farms did no other good that they certainly had done a great deal when they kept this man from the streets ; for he was on his farm all the time, tending his crops carefully, his interest being so great that it seemed as though he had discovered something that was higher and better than anything he had before, and was going to devote himself earnestly to it, so that not once during the whole summer was he found intoxicated. But just as soon as his crops were harvested and disposed of he became his old self and went right back to drink.

**Work and
Temper-
ance.**

One day, in going over the farms, I found a man trembling, the perspiration running down his face, and I thought possibly he had been drinking. I thought this very strange, as he was a man who was far above the average, a college graduate and who spoke three or four languages fluently, and as I had never seen him under the influence of liquor, I questioned him rather sharply and closely. I saw that he did not want to tell me what the trouble was before the others, so I took a walk down in the fields with him and he said, "I did not want to talk before the other men, but the fact is I have had nothing to eat all day. When I left my home this morning there was only five cents in the house. My little children had had no breakfast and I left the five cents to buy bread for them, and, though I have never done such a thing before, I begged my fare across the ferry this morning."

**College
Graduate.**

I found another man, poor, emaciated, weak. When I inquired into his circumstances and condition, I learned that he had been subsisting on radishes for three days.

One poor woman, whose rows were very crooked, would not take time to make them straight, although she had been told time and again. She finally said, "My husband lies

sick in bed and cannot move ; the children are locked in the house with him. If the house should burn he could not get up, and so I hurry to get my crops in, in order that I may get home, because, sir, I am anxious all the time lest something is happening over there."

**Harvest
Home.**

But when the harvest came, there was a time of rejoicing. Potatoes being gathered on every side, some selling in the market, others peddling, others taking home and storing in their cellars (such as had them) for winter use, potatoes, cabbages, turnips, beans and peas. They were like a lot of children who had reached a picnic grounds and were ready for a frolic, or like a people who had been travelling for a long time to get to a better land, and had at last reached that place of promise. It made me feel that if all the people who owned land could see that picture they would be ready to place it at the disposal of these people.

The experiment has convinced me thoroughly of one thing, and that is, if you will let the poor of your large cities get to the soil, and properly guide them for a year or two, they would become not only self-supporting, but would in a little while do much more. They could be so guided that in a few years they would own their homes, and a citizen who owns his own home is always the best kind of a citizen.

(Signed) J. W. KELGAARD, Supt.

Dec. 24, 1895.

OTHER CITIES.

In the following schedule it must be noted that, as to some of the cities from which "no report has been received," we do not know that they ever did more than discuss the advisability of putting the idle men to work on the idle land in some way.

Unless there is an energetic person to head such a movement, willing to suffer the consequent newspaper notoriety, such discussions usually come to nothing.

CITY.	Number of Acres.	Number of Employed.	COST.	CROPS.	Com- menced.	Manage- ment.	REMARKS.
Boston, Mass.....	60 Acres leased for \$150 a year, only 30 available for cultivation.	52 Men, mostly physically incapable. 2 Women.	\$1,110	Mostly Potatoes estimates at least \$1,932.	May 16th.	Industrial Aid Society.	Largest number employed, Americans. Phosphate fertilizers used. Mostly well cared for. Send to Wm. P. Fowler, 28 State St., for printed report.
Brooklyn, N. Y..... ¹	20	31	\$45	\$1,100	Late.	....	See letter of Mr. Erregger, page 24.
Buffalo, N. Y..... ²	250 Very poor soil.	560 families.	Under \$2,200	Estimate \$12,000 to \$15,000.	....	Industrial Association.	See letter, page 25. Send to Mayor Jewett, for printed report.
Cincinnati, O.....	20	37 families.	....	.....	Late.	....	A qualified success. Information withheld pending report. Write for same to Rufus R. French.
Detroit, Mich..... ³	500	1546 persons.	\$4,903	\$17,987 counted, \$30,000 total est.	....	Municipal.	See letter of Mr. Grennell, page 31. Write to Mayor for report of work, Seasons, 1894 and 1895.
Duluth, Minn.....	.....	About 300.	....	.....	....	Bishop McGoldrick.	See letter, page 30.
East Orange, N. J.....	.....	.....	....	.....	....	Individual.	See letter Geo. A. Vall, page 34. No record kept.
Lacrosse, Wis. ....	.....	.....	....	.....	....	Associated Charities.	See letter W. H. Jones, page 35. Scheme abandoned.
Minneapolis, Minn... ⁴	... ..	226 persons.	\$250	25 to 90 bushels of Potatoes each plot.	....	Board of Trade.	Estimates withheld pending report. Write for same to S. A. Stockwell. The Phoenix, and see letter, page 36.
Omaha, Neb.....	.....	.....	....	.....	....	Associated Charities.	.....
Rochester, N. Y.....	.....	.....	....	.....	....	....	No report.
Scranton, Penn.....	.....	.....	....	.....	....	....	No report.
Seattle, Wash.....	.....	141 heads of families.	\$204	\$2,450	....	A Committee.	See account in "Post Intelligencer," page 36.
St. Louis, Mo.....	10	120 families.	\$140	about \$1,800	....	"	See letter of Henry Fairback, page 38.
St. Paul, Minn..... ⁵	.....	118 persons.	\$275	\$1,100	....	Oliver Baker, Chairman.	No report. Nearly all want plots again next year.
Syracuse, N. Y.....	.....	.....	....	.....	....	Bu. of Labor and Charities.	Abandonment for lack of funds, hope to carry it out next season.
Toledo, O.....	137 "lots."	62 families.	\$107 45	\$190	....	Common Council.	No report received. See newspaper clipping, page 39.
Topeka, Kan.....	.....	.....	....	.....	....	Municipal League.	No report.
Washington, D. C.....	.....	.....	....	.....	....	Board of	No report. See letter of F. L. Moore, page 39.

- (1) Brooklyn gave each man but 25x200 feet or one-eighth of an acre, which was plowed, and tools, seed and fertilizer furnished. We may remark that in such a case the most careful instruction and minute cultivation would be essential to good results.
- (2) Buffalo gave one-third to one-half acre to each family, which was plowed and three bushels of seed potatoes furnished. All the cultivators had received city relief in some form. City officials rendered much service.
- (3) Detroit gave one-third of an acre each for the majority and one-quarter acre for the rest. The plots were plowed and 3 bushels of seed potatoes and 2 quarts of beans furnished. City officials gave assistance by work valued at \$500.
- (4) Minneapolis gave one-third to one-quarter acre, which was plowed, and potatoes, cabbage, tomato plants and small seed furnished. City officials gave services valued at \$200.
- (5) St. Paul gave one-half acre to each person, which was plowed.

New York alone seems to have furnished tools. Duluth is reported to have offered the bare land alone with no instructions or help.

All reports complain of the phenomenal drought, but speak of the cultivation as "most thorough" except St. Paul, Minn., which found some lack of attention to 36 plots out of 118. The plots in Detroit, Minneapolis and St. Paul were more or less scattered. The use of the land seems to have been permitted free everywhere except in Boston.

The following letters from those who were deeply interested in this movement in other cities, will amplify the tabulation on page 40. It is greatly to be regretted that full and accurate statistics were neglected, and it is earnestly urged that the utmost care be taken in this direction during the coming season, as the plan will then have far more than a local value.

" 19 Smith Street,

" BROOKLYN, N. Y., December 18th, 1895.

**Brooklyn
Drawbacks.**

" DEAR SIR :—I desire to state, in answer to your interrogations, that the experiment in cultivating vacant lands has not been a failure in the city, but it has not met the success that we had anticipated for it for various reasons, among which are that we commenced too late in the season, and that we had not been successful in procuring a proper person to act as superintendent. We have experimented with two, neither of whom appeared to possess the essential requirements to successfully carry on the work. Among other reasons is the fact that we were not able to secure lands within easy reach of the people who desired to cultivate, making it necessary for them to expend car-fare in order to reach the ground. Notwithstanding many drawbacks, we have reason to feel pleased at the result.

" We have not been able to obtain a complete statement from our superintendent ; but know that we have not lost any money, and have raised a sufficient amount in products to cover expenditures.

" The people of Brooklyn responded very satisfactorily to our calls for contributions, resulting in our having between \$500 and \$600 left over after the season's work.

" We were not able to obtain more than twenty people who were willing to cultivate, although we employed every means in our power, by advertising, sending circular letters to clergymen and by using the means at the command of the charitable institutions, yet,



FAMILY WORK.



FAMILY RECREATION.



there did not seem to be a very great desire on the part of our people to avail themselves of the opportunity offered.

"Yours respectfully,
(Signed) "J. W. ERREGGER, Chairman."

"M. H. BIRGE & SONS,
"PAPER HANGINGS,

"BUFFALO, N. Y., Oct. 6, '95.

"MY DEAR SIR:—Passing over the initial difficulties of rousing public sentiment in its favor, and organizing, the Association was finally launched with Mayor Edgar B. Jewett as President, Treasurer and Chairman of Finance Committee of fifty representative men; Wm. A. Stevens, Secretary, and Chas. Michael, Sup't. Sub Committees were appointed in four divisions of the city to assist in promoting the work.

Buffalo.

"Suitable land was obtained with some difficulty, as much of the soil about Buffalo is a heavy clay, better suited to making bricks than growing potatoes.

"Such land offered as was approved was plowed, pulverized and marked into plots of $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ an acre and numbered plainly, this work being done by neighboring farmers and paid for at \$3.50 a day. A printed circular offering a 'plot of land for gardening purposes,' and instructing the persons receiving it, if they wished to use such a plot, 'to write their name and address plainly and send to the Mayor's office,' was mailed to each family who had received city aid the previous winter.

**Garden
Plots.**

"The Charity Organization Society was furnished with blanks which they mailed to such families appearing in their books as in their judgment could avail themselves of the offer. From these applications returned a register was made—by streets, not names, alphabetically—so that we could give neighbors adjoining plots and locate them on the land nearest their homes.

"Postal cards were printed—day and place left blank—telling the receiver to appear at such a street on such a morning, bringing a hoe, basket and knife ready to plant potatoes. These cards were mailed in lots of from twenty to fifty, according to the size of the tract of land designed to be planted on the day named, and

the people came in troops, bringing the children and friends to help them.

"The Secretary took up the cards of notification and issued a manilla card the size of a postal card, writing on it the name and address of the holder, also the number of the plot assigned them. The potatoes were delivered on the ground three bushels to a plot the morning of planting.

**Detailed
Manage-
ment.**

"The Superintendent showed each one where their plot lay and how to cut the potatoes—in short, supervised all the work. We planted in drills twenty inches apart. The three bushels planted about one-half the plot, the remainder being left for other vegetables to be planted later. In this way 560 families were supplied, when we were obliged to cut short our work for lack of funds, having used about 250 acres.

"Later, a postal card (printed) was mailed to each plot owner to supply themselves with white beans and such other seed as they wished to plant, and finish their plot.

"Where families were too poor to buy the necessary seed, it was furnished by the Association.

"When the time for hoeing came we found many of the plots neglected, so a circular No. 1 was prepared and mailed to the address of the negligent owners telling them 'their plot needed hoeing, and to clean it out at once' and 'keep it clean.' The inspection was made usually by the Superintendent and Secretary in company. On the next inspection such plots as were still unworked got circular No. 2, telling them that such negligence would not be permitted, and that if on the next inspection their plot was not in order they would forfeit all claim to it and it would be turned over to some one who would work it. To such as did not respond to this No. 3 was mailed, reading that their plot would be given away on Tuesday morning. When No. 3 failed we divided the plot in two and assigned it to families we had been obliged to disappoint from lack of funds, and so carried the number of families benefited up to 578. [Apparently only nine persisted in neglect.—ED.]

"The round of inspection went on constantly, circular No. 2 being mailed as often as it was found necessary. Circular No. 4 was known as the 'bugging circular,' and was sent when necessary; but

we were not troubled much with the pests. Each plot holder keeps a little book in which is entered a memorandum of all the crop harvested. As a result of all this detail we are harvesting now from 20 to 52½ bushels of potatoes to a plot, one-half planted to potatoes, and as high as ninety bushels where the whole plot was given to potatoes. A conservative estimate gives us a food product of a market value of twelve to fifteen thousand dollars—with a total outlay of less than two thousand two hundred dollars. **Inspections.**

“The Charity Organization Society investigated all applications that came to us other than through the regular applications, and furnished us a Polish interpreter as often as we had need for one. Other than that, the work was done entirely by the Superintendent and Secretary, there being no foremen or paid clerks. The Mayor’s office furnished desk room, so we had practically no expense except printing and postage. The amount of good done all these people, beside the food provided them, cannot be estimated. And the gratitude a large majority of them show at being permitted to work the land is pitiful—I don’t know how else to express it.

“Very truly yours,
(Signed) “W. A. STEVENS, Sec’y.”

Captain Gardener, U. S. Army, who was of a practical turn of mind and had some experience in managing gardens for troops, was placed in charge of the Detroit Farms. The Captain had taken a deep interest in the poor and gave up his leave of absence to devote himself to the work. He writes :—

“DETROIT, December 12, 1895.

Detroit.

“TO THE NEW YORK ASSOCIATION FOR IMPROVING
THE CONDITION OF THE POOR.

“Following our efforts here in Detroit, in 1894, it was New York which first saw the utility and common sense of the plan and adopted it in 1895.

“After Mr. N. S. Rosenau came to Detroit to look into the plan and you took it up, the New York papers and your pamphlets gave the scheme wide circulation, so that it was rescued out of the domain of ridicule and flippancy to which it had been consigned by

**New York's
Example.**

many. I was so impressed with the great good that would result to our laboring poor, if this plan was generally adopted, that I wrote an article upon the subject, setting forth our methods and success. I had offered it to some of the leading magazines, by all of whom it was respectfully declined. But after New York adopted the plan, several of these asked for it and offered pay, who had previously refused it when offered gratis.

"It was published in the *Charities Review*. Since this time, I have been kept busy answering questions and writing about it.

"This year we have met with remarkable success. We plowed and harrowed, and furnished seed for 1546 parcels of land to as many heads of families, in all 455 acres in $\frac{1}{3}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$ acre pieces. We harvested in potatoes alone, not counting other produce, over 60,000 bushels, an average of 40 bushels per family. The total crops were worth \$30,000, at an expense of \$4,900 out of an appropriation of \$5,000 for that purpose.

**Land and
Food.**

"Our people were mostly shovel laborers, whose wages do not average a dollar a day and who have large families. It would do your heart good to see the gratitude and appreciation of these people. I tell you, Mr. Hall, it is the opportunity to help themselves that people want, and it does seem so wrong that in cities like this, people should at times almost die of starvation and yet thousands of acres lie idle within its limits which are held for speculation. It is a sort of a 'dog in the manger' business. Poor people are often as sensitive about being considered objects of charity as you or I would be, and as a rule they prefer to work for what they get, in preference to receiving things for nothing.

"We succeeded in getting our land for the purpose free this year. I predict that in a year or two the scheme will be universally adopted in the United States, for it appeals to common sense, and besides saving taxation, it teaches people to rely upon themselves and their own efforts. Direct giving makes paupers; this method constantly reduces their number.

"Yours very truly,

(Signed) "C. GARDENER."

“DETROIT, MICH., March 22d, 1895.

“MY DEAR SIR :—The city poor-farm scheme as operated in this city last year was a great success. The poor, hard-working people see that upon a little patch of half an acre they can produce enough to half support themselves, and it sets them to thinking. They reason thus : ‘If I can almost live on half an acre, I could make a comfortable living on a few acres,’ and they begin to figure on getting into the country.

“In answer to a question asked me, I asserted that at least one hundred families had sought and found homes in the country as a direct result of their experience of last year. I fell far short of the mark, however, for one gentleman, the Hon. Joseph Waltz, of Waltz, Mich., (a small village in this county) writes : ‘I see in the papers what you say about city farming and think you are right in the matter, as twenty-five families from the city have located hereabouts.’ If twenty-five families have located in the vicinity of one little village, the number of families who have located in other sections of the state must far exceed one hundred.

(Signed) “F. B. DICKERSON,
“Superintendent of Poor.”

Under date of December, 1895, Mr. Dickerson writes again :—

“DEAR SIR :—I have no particular data about the number who have left the city in consequence of the ‘Potato Patch Scheme,’ but am constantly hearing of such cases. The interest in that direction has not abated, but, if anything, increased.

“Very truly,
(Signed) “F. B. DICKERSON.”

Definite figures on this subject would be most valuable.

Draining
the Cities.

"PRO-CATHEDRAL, DULUTH, 23d December. 1895.

Duluth.

"The movement in Duluth for the cultivation of vacant lots was successful in a certain degree. When I proposed in a public letter to carry out the plan, the newspapers gave it a clear approval, and the owners of lots told me to take any vacant places they had, for the work.

"The agent of the Associated Charities, Mr. Miller, also took great interest in the charity and kept some account of the number of persons who took lots for cultivation. While many applied to me personally, others called on the owners of the lands and arranged with them in person, thus we have nothing more than a general idea of the amount of land taken.

Interest of
the
Churches.

"Probably about 300 persons in all availed themselves of the opportunity. The priests in the various churches encouraged the poor of their parishes, but this first year the movement was of slow growth.

"If this work be taken up next year by the Associated Charities, aided by the city, it will do much good. The general burthen of out-door relief will be lessened; the poor will become more self-reliant, and the children will have a little spot of mother earth which, in cultivating, will bring them health and strength. We notice here as a good effect of the work that some have taken land on the St. Paul and Duluth Railroad property, and this is very encouraging.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) "JAMES McGOLRICK, Bishop of Duluth."

CONTINUED SUCCESS.

"The potato farms of Detroit, Mich., have been tremendous successes this year. There were 1546 allotments, or about 500 acres. This is 601 more allotments than last year. The estimates of the value of crops are :

What was raised.	Amount.	Estimated value March to August prices, when most of the crops were consumed.	Market value at present prices.
Potatoes.....	61,840 bu.	\$40,196	\$15,460 00
Beans.....	1,000 bu.	2,000	1,280 00
Turnips.....	3,000 bu.	1,000*	750 00
Beets.....	1,000 bu.	400*	250 00
Corn.....	400 bu.	180	116 00
Cabbage.....	4,668 hd.	250*	117 50
Squashes.....	400 hd.	30*	23 80
Pumpkins.....	500 hd.		
Totals.....	67,240 bu. 5,568 hd.	\$44,056	\$17,997 30

*No market quotations; estimated.

"These figures of crops were secured by Secretary McGregor of the commission. He sent out large numbers of postal cards to the people to whom land was allotted, asking them to write on the cards and return to the commission the number of bushels of potatoes they raised, specifying each kind. The cards were sent to about one-half the people holding land. They were filled out and returned to the number of 480, which represents about one-fourth of those holding land. From the results obtained, combined with the experience of the commissioners and of those in charge, the commission has been enabled to estimate the crops as a whole. In some of the cases the returns show that 60 bushels of potatoes were raised to an allotment. The commission, after comparing notes on the total crop, have allowed an average of forty bushels of potatoes to an allotment.

"The commission was given an appropriation of \$5,000 by the Common Council, and in addition thereto small donations were received. There is a balance on hand of about \$100. Of

**Common
Council's
Aid.**

the 3000 bushels of turnips raised on the farms 500 bushels were raised by the commission itself and turned over to the poor commission. In addition to the crops raised already mentioned there was considerable small garden stuff, consisting of lettuce, radishes, cauliflower, peas, etc., of which no account could be taken. The commission did not think it wise to bear the expense of gathering statistics as to nativity, financial condition, number of family, etc., of the poor people receiving land. But in a general way it is stated that the Polish people predominated in those assisted, the Germans next, then the Americans and colored people. Of the 1546 people given land 1218 were on the poor commissioner's list.

"The final report will recommend that the Legislature be asked to give the City of Detroit power to purchase a farm on the west side and another on the east side of the city for the purpose of making the potato farm a permanent feature in caring for Detroit's poor. The land, the report will say, can be purchased far out of the city, if deemed advisable, without being any detriment to the project. The land can be rented to the poor for a nominal sum, sufficient to take care of the interest on the investment, and to fund the capital if thought advisable.

"Inasmuch as there are over 50,000 vacant lots within the city's boundaries, the single-taxers are suggesting through the Detroit papers that this land would be utilized if taxes were taken off houses, machinery and other kinds of wealth and put on land values. This would immediately give laborers employment, and the necessity for poor farms would disappear.

"Capt. Cornelius Gardener, the Chairman of the commission, says :

"I firmly believe that if the value of the crops raised on this year's farm were not more than the \$5,000 appropriated for carrying on the farm, the plan would still have been a success, inasmuch as instead of giving charity outright the city has taught the poor to help themselves. I expect the plan will prevail all over the country. There are sure to be always 1000 poor families in a city of the size of Detroit in need of such aid, who will have to be taken care of by the poor commission with outright charity unless this plan is adopted. Those helped were for the most part people with homes,

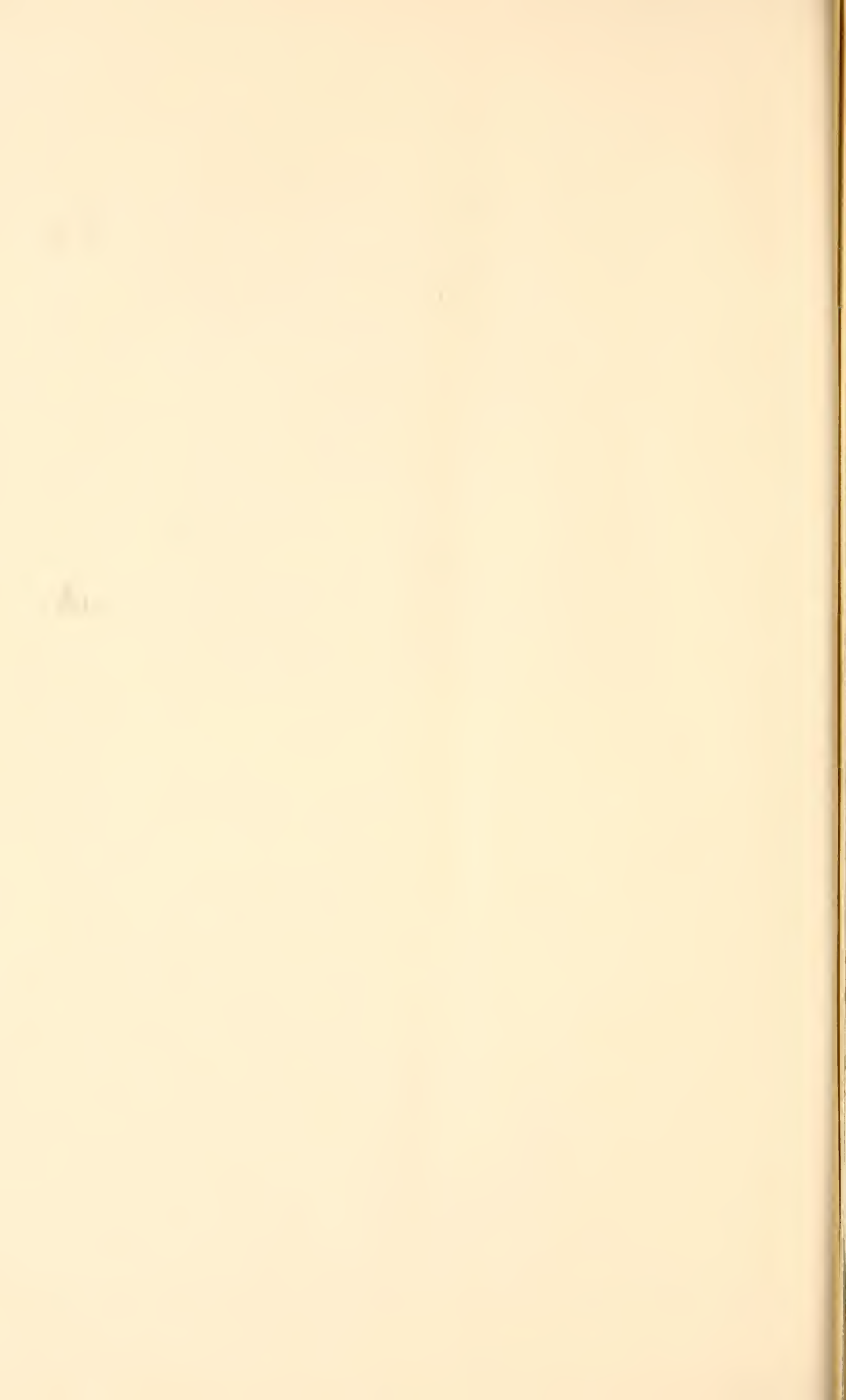
50,000
Vacant
Lots.



BABY FOLD.



THE SUPERINTENDENT'S ROUNDS.



and there was none of that depressing influence of a systematic poor-house in connection with the charity extended to them.'

"The detailed report of the commission indicates the following expenditures :

Plowing	\$1,530
Seed potatoes, 253,905 pounds.....	1,712
Other seed.....	252
Labor, hauling, staking land, etc.....	714
Stationery, printing, paris green, stakes, clerk hire, etc.	695
Total.....	<hr/> \$4,903

"The secret of the success of the plan in Detroit is the active co-operation of owners of vacant land, an energetic Mayor and the use of the machinery of the poor commission to locate needy families.

(Signed) "JUDSON GRENNELL,
"Of the Committee."

We clip from Mayor Pingree's personal account, kindly forwarded to our Secretary, as follows :—

"There were reserved by the committee 30 lots which were planted with potatoes and turnips, under its direction. The purpose of these lots was to replace to a cultivator any lot from which he might be moved by the land being sold for building purposes. * *

"People who had obtained assistance from that commission during the past two years, were notified by it that land for cultivation was at their disposal, and that failing to avail themselves of this opportunity to help themselves their names would be stricken from the books of the commission, as not deserving aid this winter. It is an error to suppose that because people are poor and needy, that they refuse to help themselves where an opportunity offers. From the experience of the committee, such is seldom the case. * *

**Undeserv-
ing Poor.**

"Out of the 1546 applicants for lots, 1258 had been on the books of the City Poor Commission. Opportunity was also offered to obtain a parcel by paying a small sum of money, from 50 cents to one dollar, as rent. About one hundred persons availed themselves of this.

"At an inspection made about September 10th, by the com-

Money Prizes.

mittee, for the purpose of awarding small prizes of money, subscribed for this purpose by members of the committee, for the best taken-care of lots, it was found impossible to award such prizes for the reason that there were no weeds to be seen anywhere, and there were at least 250 lots between which there was no choice.

"It is fair to say that the scheme brought returns to the cultivators to about the value of \$30,000 ; but even if its returns amounted to only half that sum, it was well worth the money invested, for in every case, it went to the support of our most needy people who, by their own labor, provided that which perhaps they might otherwise have been obliged to receive from direct charity. Each person was permitted to harvest without interference or condition, whatever his lot contained ; nor did the committee concern itself with the disposition of the crops.

"As will be seen, the cost per lot for plowing, harrowing and furnishing the larger portion of the seed, and for stakes, is \$3.10.

"The committee is of the opinion that in order to successfully carry out this plan for the next year, it is necessary that the land to be used be obtained this winter, and that the Board of Public Works be requested to deposit thereon the street sweepings in order that the soil may be enriched thereby. Much of the land used therefor, has been almost exhausted of fertilizing qualities. Were this done, much larger returns could be expected."

East Orange.

"100 PROSPECT STREET, EAST ORANGE, N. J.,

"12th mo. 2d, 1895.

"DEAR SIR :—Yours of 30th ult. in regard to cultivating vacant lands is received. Our experiment was carried on by a few individuals, for the purpose of learning whether it was practicable. We kept no data from which we can fill up a report, and do not think it would benefit you or us in joining in your report, as our experiment was purely local. I think I can say *it was a success, as over 75% took good care of their plots and received benefit from them.*

"Yours, respectfully,

(Signed) "GEO. A. VAIL."

"LA CROSSE, WIS., Dec. 3d, 1895.

La Crosse.

"DEAR SIR :—We made an effort early last spring to try to interest the unemployed poor people of our city in the work of cultivating some unimproved vacant land near at hand, for the purpose of raising vegetables for their own use, offering to plow, and furnish seed without expense.

"Offers of land were made by owners, and all necessary money for seed and other expenses were promised by the county officers, but only two or three persons responded.

"This was owing mainly to the fact that our soil is very sandy, and requires much manure—and then, without a liberal use of water in a dry season we are not sure of getting any crops. Another reason is that most of our poor people (men) find employment during the season from April to November in saw mills and on the river, and cannot work in the field.

Drought.

"We have faith in the Detroit Pingree plan when all the conditions are favorable.

"Very respectfully yours,

(Signed) "WM. W. JONES, Secretary."

We clip from the First Annual Report
of the Associated Charities of La Crosse, Wis.:—

"The Grand Army of Impecunious Tourists, commonly called tramps, as usual has invaded our borders to some extent. A few have accepted an invitation to take a card to the Secretary's office, where offers of work have been made by him, whenever possible. To their credit, let it be said, a very few have accepted the offer, performed good service for a day or two and moved forward. * * * Our experience with this class of people leads us to believe that very few of them really desire permanent work and that they are unworthy of any assistance by benevolent people. They prefer the tramp life, with all its hardships, to quiet, honest toil, and so long as they are fed by well-meaning but mistaken philanthropists the army will

Tramps.

increase and tramp, tramp continually. The only way, it seems to us, to reduce the ranks of the grand army is to make the business unprofitable by withholding supplies."

[It does not appear why these wanderers could not have been offered work on a Co-operative Farm and if they refused, then firmly dealt with.—ED.]

" ROCHESTER, MINN., Oct. 3d, 1895.

**Minne-
apolis.**

" MY DEAR SIR :—Your favor to Secretary of Board of Trade has been referred to me. We have put the vacant lot plan of helping the poor to help themselves in operation in *Minneapolis with great success*. We are not ready to make our final report yet. As soon as I return to Minneapolis I shall call our commission together and make our report. I fathered the plan in Minneapolis and am deeply interested in its success.

" Yours respectfully,

" S. A. STOCKWELL."

The Seattle (Washington) *Post Intelligencer* of Sept. 12, 1895, says :—

Seattle.

**Handful of
Seed.**

" The waste land plan has proved as marked a success in Seattle as in Detroit, where it was started, and as in New York. * * * It was started in Seattle last April, but the movement was not well under way till the middle of May. There were 171 applicants. Of this number thirty allowed their applications to lapse, leaving 141 who went to work, representing 827 individuals. Lands were secured for eighty-nine, while fifty-two furnished their own land, but were assisted with seeds and implements. Fifteen applicants who were furnished with seeds, etc., abandoned their land on account of sickness or other good reason. Three men quit without any reason. The city donated \$100. The expenditures amounted to \$203.70, leaving a balance of \$11.35. The average cost to each applicant for seed and implements was only \$1.44. The seed furnished each applicant amounted on an average to 1 ounce of onions, $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce lettuce, $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce carrots, $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce radish, 1 ounce turnips, 1 pound beans, 1 pound onion sets, 1 pound peas, 1 sack of potatoes.

“ Mr. Bridges, the Superintendent, by investigation of the crops of the ninety-six who planted potatoes, finds the average crop for each applicant is twenty bushels, which would give in potatoes alone 1920 bushels. It was impossible to obtain exact figures for the other vegetables, as many have lived during the summer on what they have raised. One applicant has kept a careful record of all he had obtained from the seed given him, which is as follows : Potatoes, 28 bushels ; beets, 5 bushels ; onions, 3 bushels ; cucumbers, 17 dozen ; cabbage, 300 head ; peas, 1 sack ; beans, 2 sacks ; carrots, 4 bushels ; lettuce and radishes, \$3 worth ; total value of this one crop, \$35.50. The estimated value of all the vegetables raised by the applicants who have completed their harvest is \$2,450.

“ The Rev. D. C. Garrett’s report says : Considering that the plan was inaugurated quite late for this climate, and the misfortune of unusual drought, which has proved entirely disastrous to some crops on high land, where water could not be obtained, the success attained is such as to justify a strong recommendation for a repetition of this movement early in 1896. Aside from furnishing employment to worthy men and food to their families, the plan is one of the best ever proposed for encouraging thrift, self-help and a desire to secure one’s living from the mother earth, man’s natural and inalienable source of subsistence. * * * This system, if well directed, could be carried out on such a scale as to practically abolish poverty in Seattle, except from sickness or intemperance.

“ To prevent any one from losing the results of his labor by reason of the owner of the land selling or building before the crop is harvested, it is recommended that the board of managers have planted and cultivated a number of emergency patches to be given to those who are dispossessed of the land they first occupy and till.”

**Emergency
Patches.**

“ TOKLAS, SINGERMAN & CO., INCORPORATED,
“ CLOTHING, &C., 713-715 FRONT STREET,
“ SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, Oct. 3, 1895.

“ MY DEAR SIR :—Replying to your esteemed favor * * *
It is true that this is our first year, but I can *not permit the use of the*

word 'experiment' to be applied to our station. *It was a grand success* and we will work to resume our labors next spring.

"Very respectfully,

"FERDINAND TOKLAS,

"Sec'y Land Plan of Seattle."

"HENRY FAIRBACK, BUILDER,

"BUILDERS' EXCHANGE, TENTH & OLIVE STS.

"ST. LOUIS, MO., Dec. 24th, 1895.

St. Louis.

"We planted in all about ten acres divided in lots, as we found the soil suitable for cultivation. Generally each lot contained about one-fourth of an acre, which we plowed for the persons who were to plant and raise vegetables on the same.

"We helped about 120 people, mostly families. In some cases we furnished tents for them to live in on the land during the summer season. These tents were large enough to accommodate four persons comfortably. Before assigning parcels of land to applicants we would examine as to whether they were honest, worthy people whom we could depend upon, and that they would benefit themselves.

"We furnished all the seed and implements to plant and cultivate with. Most all planted potatoes, lettuce, beans, turnips and radishes. Every person to whom we allotted ground worked with spirit and industry. The result was, at the end of the season, a splendid success and a betterment for humanity.

Lack of Public Aid.

"Our contributions financially were limited, we only had about one hundred and forty dollars to work with, we had to use the most stringent economy, so as to help those who wanted to work for their own food. In the beginning we met with many discouraging conditions, as we had a very dry spring, and did not commence operations until the first of June.

"Our entire executive committee, composed of five members, watched and attended to the work without pay.

"The results of helping the unemployed by giving to each family of persons only enough land to cultivate and raise food for their own consumption is the proper plan, which all cities should adopt.

"If all our cities could compel all idle persons, beggars and tramps, who are a burden on the town and an eyesore on our streets, and have them work for their living, place them on land, teach them to become not only useful to themselves, but also by their labor help others, with their industry our social conditions would improve, poverty would diminish and character and manhood be elevated thereby.

"Very respectfully,

"HENRY FAIRBACK,

"Chairman of the Detroit Plan."

**Labor
Colonies.**

HOW IT PAID IN TOLEDO.

RESULT OF VACANT LOT FARMING LAST SEASON.

"The infirmiry directors have carefully compiled reports of the results of last summer's farming of vacant lots by poor of the city. There were 137 lots planted, of which 92 produced crops. These were planted by 62 families, and 21 families found only barrenness for their work. The 92 lots turned 759½ bushels of potatoes, an average of 12½ bushels to each family. There was \$136.20 donated for the purpose, and \$107.45 expended for seed, plowing, etc., leaving \$28.75 for a starter for next year. Of the expenditures, \$50.16 was upon lots which proved barren.

Toledo.

"Value of crop at 25c. per bushel, \$189.87; cost of raising 759½ bushels, 6¼c. per bushel, including barren lots, 13c.; total cost per family, \$1.17.

"Thirty-three Americans planted lots, 31 Polish, 8 Irish, 6 Germans, 3 French and 2 colored.

"Those in charge were unable to do anything until the 10th of May, as the donations came in late. Three thousand bushels of potatoes could have been raised at an extra expense of not over \$50.

"Over 100 families have made application to plant next year."

[From a local paper].

"WASHINGTON, D. C., December 2, 1895.

**Washington
D. C.**

"DEAR SIR:—In reply to yours, I regret to say that our lot planting last season was not a success, owing to our people *starting it very late in the spring* and the excessive drought during the summer. I therefore think best not to publish our statistics this season.

"Very respectfully yours,

"F. L. MOORE, Chairman."

Schedule for the Cultivation of Vacant Lots by the Unemployed.

Application No. _____

Date _____

St.	No.	Front	Rear	SURNAME.	RELATIONSHIP TO HEAD.	NUMBER CAPABLE OF WORK.	AGE	SEX	W—White C—Colored	NATIONALITY	BIRTH PLACE	COUNTRY BORN	CITY BORN	CITY BRED	OCCUPATION	WORK HOURS PER DAY	STEADINESS OF WORK LAST 12 MONTHS	NUMBER OF ROOMS	RENT PER MONTH	LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN CITY IN MONTHS	AMOUNT OF LAND	RECEIPTS	EXPERIENCE IN FARM-ING IN MONTHS	Can you get or pay for Tools Seed or Fertilizer
1	D.R.	.....	.....	.....	1	2	55	1 F	W	Ger	Germany	Y	.....	Y	Farmer	10	3	2	6	545	4	336.20	325	no
2	P.S.	.....	.....	.....	3	2	40	2 F, 1 M	W	Ire	Ireland	Y	.....	Y	Laborer	10	2	2	10	54	1 1/2	130.55	16	no
3	J.F.	.....	.....	.....	4	4	45	4 F	W	Ire	Ireland	Y	.....	Y	Laborer	10	3	5	11	46	1 1/2	126.50	60	no
4	T.E.	.....	.....	.....	4	2	65	4 F	C	U.S.	Jacksonville	Y	Y	Y	Laborer	8	2	4	Free	340	1 1/2	109.61	208	no
5	V.S.	.....	.....	.....	2	2	50	2 F	W	Ger	Germany	Y	.....	Y	Laborer	10	2	5	4	420	2	54.60	38	no
6	F.F.	.....	.....	.....	3	3	30	3 M, 1 F	W	Ger	Germany	Y	.....	Y	Laborer	10	2	5	8	60	1 1/2	27.10	.....	no
7	A.M.	.....	.....	.....	2	2	55	3 M, 1 F	W	Switz	Switzerland	Y	Y	Y	Junior	10	3	4	10	208	1 1/2	117.15	.....	no
8	F.K.	.....	.....	.....	4	4	38	3 F, 1 M	W	Ire	Ireland	Y	.....	Y	Laborer	8	6	3	7	100	1 1/2	75.10	24	no
9	F.K.	.....	.....	.....	4	2	46	3 F, 1 M	W	Ire	Boston	Y	.....	Y	Laborer	10	3	3	7	220	2 1/2	18.30	60	no
10	J.M.	.....	.....	.....	4	2	44	3 F, 1 M	W	U.S.	Ireland	Y	.....	Y	Clerk	10	2	6	10	307	1 1/2	61.44	.....	no
11	W.B.	.....	.....	.....	4	4	57	3 F, 1 M	W	Ire	Ireland	Y	.....	Y	Laborer	10	4	5	11	125	1 1/2	36.50	36	no
12	J.McG.	.....	.....	.....	4	2	44	3 F, 1 M	W	U.S.	Stamford	Y	.....	Y	Laborer	10	3	6	12	238	1 1/2	80.75	.....	no
13	F.S.	.....	.....	.....	2	2	36	6 F, 1 M	W	Ger	Germany	Y	.....	Y	Laborer	10	6	4	9	204	1 1/2	24.00	20	no
14	P.M.	.....	.....	.....	1	1	18	6 F, 1 M	W	U.S.	N.Y. City	Y	.....	Y	Painter	8	6	4	.....	216	1 1/2	8.00	.....	no
15	J.F.	.....	.....	.....	1	1	58	M	W	Ire	Ireland	Y	.....	Y	Clerk	10	5	4	.....	231	1 1/2	58.75	12	no
16	F.K.	.....	.....	.....	1	1	35	M	W	Hung	Austria	Y	.....	Y	Laborer	10	5	3	10	36	1 1/2	25.00	.....	no
17	H.S.	.....	.....	.....	2	1	77	2 F, 1 F	W	Ger	Frankfort	Y	.....	Y	Laborer	10	2	3	.....	528	1 1/2	41.30	180	no
18	P.H.	.....	.....	.....	2	1	61	2 F, 2 M	W	Ire	Tipperary	Y	.....	Y	Laborer	10	3	3	6	120	1 1/2	61.76	6	no
19	P.D.	.....	.....	.....	4	1	45	1 F, 2 M	W	Ire	Ireland	Y	.....	Y	Laborer	10	5	5	11	101	1 1/2	93.00	.....	no
20	J.W.	.....	.....	.....	3	2	58	2 F, 1 M	W	Ire	Ireland	Y	.....	Y	Laborer	10	4	4	9	68	1 1/2	.....	.....	no
21	M.A.	.....	.....	.....	3	2	37	2 F, 1 M	W	Ger	Germany	Y	.....	Y	Laborer	10	3	3	7	78	1 1/2	118.00	14	no
22	M.Ck.	.....	.....	.....	8	2	43	2 F, 6 M	W	Scot	Scotland	.....	.....	Y	Laborer	10	4	5	9	80	1 1/2	25.00	.....	no
23	C.P.	.....	.....	.....	9	2	53	1 F, 2 M	W	Scand	Gottenburg	.....	.....	Y	Longshore	.....	.....	2	3 1/2	283	1 1/2	39.00	.....	no
24	C.C.	.....	.....	.....	9	2	44	3 F, 2 M	W	Ire	Ireland	Y	.....	Y	Laborer	10	5	4	11	180	1	139.25	17	no
25	T.O.B.	.....	.....	.....	9	2	50	2 M, 1 F	W	Ire	Limerick	Y	.....	Y	Laborer	10	.....	3	11	60	1 1/2	24.65	17	no
26	J.M.	.....	.....	.....	9	2	60	2 F, 4 M	W	Ire	Ireland	Y	.....	Y	Laborer	10	.....	7	13 1/2	13 1/2	1 1/2	122.95	240	no
27	A.B.	.....	.....	.....	5	2	45	3 F, 2 M	W	Ger	Germany	Y	.....	Y	Laborer	10	4	3	7	282	1 1/2	16.05	.....	no
28	S.S.	.....	.....	.....	3	2	38	3 M	W	Ire	Ireland	Y	.....	Y	Stone Cutter	8	4	4	10	145	1 1/2	120.25	17	no
29	R.F.	.....	.....	.....	2	1	49	2 F, 1 M	W	Ger	Germany	Y	.....	Y	Photog'pher	8	5	3	7 1/2	304	1 1/2	102.45	.....	no
30	J.O.H.	.....	.....	.....	3	1	40	3 F, 1 M	W	Ire	New Market	Y	.....	Y	Laborer	10	7	3	5 1/2	276	1 1/2	102.66	.....	no
31	T.P.	.....	.....	.....	3	1	50	3 F, 1 M	W	Ire	Tipperary	Y	.....	Y	Cooper	10	3	4	7	209	1 1/2	50.95	3	no
32	W.W.	.....	.....	.....	2	1	49	1 M, 1 F	W	Ger	Germany	Y	.....	Y	Laborer	10	4	3	7 1/2	235	1 1/2	59.80	7	no

[illegible]

A few letters from those who had the best opportunities of judging of our own work are added in order to set out independent impressions. A summary of rather imperfect Reports from other cities will be found on other pages. The table of social statistics will afford opportunity for the most varied deductions. Each interested person will do that from his own view point. Instead of drawing any general conclusions, the opinion of the Committee in charge is stated. These reasons are of value because the men expressing them kept in touch with the work.

"14TH STREET, NEW YORK.

**Natural
Plan.**

"What especially gratified me was to see that a natural plan has been found to give New York tenement house people a chance to work in the open air within reasonable walking distance of their own homes, directly for their own benefit, and thus to help them without destroying their self-respect by offering them alms.

"If the use of larger plots of vacant land, which would not be otherwise used, is freely offered, the plan could be and should be made self-supporting in every large city of the United States. That it is self-supporting in and near the City of New York has been fully demonstrated by the experiment of the season of 1895.

(Signed) "WM. STEINWAY."

"OFFICE OF KUHN, LOEB & CO.,

"DEC. 12TH, 1895.

**Thrift
Inculcated.**

"The features of the Vacant Lot Scheme which most induced me to interest myself in the scheme were :

"1. The promise it held out to almost every poor family to utilize the unemployed time of any of its members in a manner certain to secure it a comparatively good return, and

"2. That the employment or investment of labor was to be made during the summer, or at a time when a pinch to the poor is generally least felt, while the benefit from the product would come in the autumn or winter, or at a time when the needs of the dependent class are, as a rule, the greatest.

"I believe that the experiment we have made has amply proved

that these purposes have been attained, and I hope, with the experience we have now acquired, the results of further efforts in the same direction are certain to be even more satisfactory.

“Truly yours,
(Signed) “JACOB H. SCHIFF.”

“OFFICE OF INDUSTRIAL CHRISTIAN ALLIANCE.

“The three features of the Vacant Lots Cultivation enterprise that give me especial satisfaction are :

“1. The demonstration of the willingness and ability of the tenement house population to become successful farmers with a little encouragement and instruction.

“2. The financial results of the very hastily organized experiment of last summer. Labor that would otherwise have gone to waste returned more than \$12,000 from an outlay of about \$4,000.

“3. The encouragement that this experiment gives to the belief that the deplorable results of the congested population of cities can best be avoided by a return of the people to the soil. It is certainly a wicked anomaly, directly contrary to the intention of the Creator, that men, women and children should be starving or working out their lives in grinding poverty, in cities contiguous to which tens of thousands of acres of untilled soil lie ready to provide bountifully for every need of a teeming population.

“(Signed) ARTHUR W. MILBURY.”

“4 EAST 46TH STREET, NEW YORK.

“In answer to your inquiry permit me to say that what impresses me most deeply about our ‘Cultivation of Vacant Lots,’ is

“1st. That if the poor are allowed free opportunity to work they nearly all will work. Those who will not work should be left to starve.

“2d. That the main cause of undeserved pauperism is speculation in vacant land near the cities, which ought to be checked by enforcing the law requiring that they be assessed at the same rates for taxation as other property.

(Signed) “BOLTON HALL.”

**Waste
Labor.**

**Unde-
served
Poverty.**

"CHARITIES OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL,
"NEW YORK, Dec. 15, 1895.

Fresh Air

'In reading your report I was particularly impressed with the *advantage it gave mothers and children by taking them away* so frequently from the crowded and heated city and giving them a taste of the country life so conducive to health and energy. We were not successful in inducing our people to take up the work, because in most cases the men out of employment had to be on the watch when work would start up, else they would find their places taken by others.

"Sincerely yours,

(Signed) "THOMAS M. MULRY."

**Back to the
Farm.**

"OFFICE OF THE UNITED HEBREW CHARITIES,
"NEW YORK, Dec. 13, 1895.

"MY DEAR SIR:—Judging from such reports as have come to my notice, I am inclined to believe that the most valuable result has been on the educational side, I feel convinced that those who have taken honest advantage of the opportunity afforded them to learn what can be earned from the soil will realize how much better a chance is open to them to gain a livelihood by farming. The removal of a few such families from the tenements of New York and their success in cultivating the soil must undoubtedly prove contagious and ultimately overcome the antipathy of many to leaving the city for the rural districts.

"Yours faithfully,

(Signed) "NATHANIEL S. ROSENAU."

105 East 22d Street.

**Home
Possi-
bilities.**

"1. The opportunity of enabling elderly men, who had been crowded out of their positions, to become self-supporting, whereby their independence and self respect were retained.

"2. The communal character of the work, each member of the family toiling with zest and directed intelligence because conscious that the result of his labor would go to him.

"3. The awakening and inspiration of the thought, that the

possibility of a home might be a reality, because of the newly learned knowledge in farming, with its evidence in crops actually harvested.

(Signed) "WM. H. TOLMAN."

"32 NASSAU STREET.

"In the experiment of the Cultivation of Vacant City Lots by the Unemployed, I have been particularly gratified by the success obtained in enabling superannuated and partially crippled men to support themselves by their own labor. To transform these unfortunates, who have become dependent upon others through no fault of their own, into self-supporting citizens is a real achievement in philanthropy,

**Old Men
Cared for.**

(Signed) "R. FULTON CUTTING."

The Board of Aldermen were much interested in the Vacant Lot scheme and a formal resolution was moved and carried offering their co-operation.

**New York
Aldermen.**

By Alderman Goodman—

Whereas, The Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor has inaugurated a movement to relieve the unemployed by giving them an opportunity to cultivate vacant lots in and about the city; and

Whereas, Such movement is meeting with merited encouragement, to an extent which indicates that success is fully assured; and

Whereas, This charity is one of the most practical and praiseworthy, and is deserving of all the moral and material aid which can be given towards extending it in every direction; therefore

Resolved, That the Committee on Lands, Places and Park Department be and they are hereby instructed to co-operate with the Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor,

with a view of offering such lots and lands belonging to the city as are vacant and suitable for the purpose indicated ; and to recommend to this Board the length of time and under what conditions such lots shall be tendered for the uses set forth.

Alderman Goodman moved the adoption of the resolution.

Alderman Oakley moved that the resolution be referred to the Committee on County Affairs.

The President put the question whether the Board would agree with said motion ; which was decided in the negative by the following vote :

Affirmative—Aldermen Brown, Burke, Campbell, Clancy, Goetz, Goodwin, Hackett, Muh, Murphy, Oakley, Tait, and Wund—12.

Negative—The President, the Vice-President, Aldermen Dwyer, Goodman, Hall, Kennefick, Lantry, Marshall, Noonan, O'Brien, Olcott, Randall, Robinson, School, Ware, Wines, and Woodward—17.

On motion of Alderman Goodman, the resolution was then referred to the Committee on Lands, Places and Park Department.

It was a matter of extreme regret to the Committee that they were unable to avail themselves of this generous offer, but it was deemed unwise, as the expense of superintendence and watching the land would have been very heavy.

**New
Members.**

At a recent meeting of the Committee, Mr. William Steinway and Mr. A. S. Frissell were added to the Committee. The same land was offered, with an addition of ninety acres, for cultivation during the coming season, on the sole condition that The Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor should take charge of the management, as in 1895. The same organization as that of last year is continued.

Because of the experimental character of the plan in 1895 and the impossibility of beginning the work early, the results were very materially lessened. For the coming season, the seed potatoes are already purchased and the manure from four of the stables of the Street Cleaning Department, which Commissioner Waring has placed at the disposal of the Committee, is being hauled and some of the new ground is being plowed. A team of horses, wagon and harnesses have been bought in order to save a greater expense in hiring the teaming. Mr. Steinway has given the use of a barn on the farms, but the feed of the horses and the wages of the driver are expenses which must be met by cash in hand at once. The Committee is devoting its best thought to planning the details of the work and then to the necessary supervision. It therefore appeals with confidence to the financial co-operation of the public, who cannot devote their time and thought to this most practical automatic scheme for relief by work, but can give their money. Contributions at once will be doubly welcome, so that the Committee may be enabled to carry out their plans. All money should be sent to the Treasurer, Jacob H. Schiff, 27 Pine Street.

1896.

Need of
Money.

JACOB H. SCHIFF,	}	<i>Publication Committee.</i>
BOLTON HALL,		
WILLIAM H. TOLMAN.		

CONTRIBUTORS.

1895.

Agnew, Mrs. C. R.....	10 00	McDowell, Helen E.....	10 00
Avery, Samuel P.....	10 00	McKeever, J. Lawrence.....	10 00
Babcock, Miss M.....	10 00	Mali, Charles.....	3 00
Betts, Frederick H.....	25 00	Mansfield, Howard.....	10 00
Blood, S. S.....	10 00	Mason, W. T.....	10 00
Bernheim, A. C. (deceased).....	5 00	Minturn, Mrs. J. W.....	25 00
Bond, Wm. E.....	20 00	Murray, J. B.....	25 00
Bosworth, Dr. F. H.....	10 00	Nathan, F.....	5 00
Breese, Mrs. A. E.....	20 00	Neresheimer, E. Aug.....	10 00
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Dodge, Mrs. W. E.....	15 00	Scribner, Mrs. J. Blair.....	25 00
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Fairchild, Charles S.....	20 00	Stetson, Francis Lynde.....	25 00
Glazier, S. W.....	20 00	Stokes, Anson Phelps.....	25 00
Goldman, Henry.....	10 00	Sugden, E.....	10 00
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Griffith, Mrs. G. W.....	10 00	Thorne, Miss Phebe Anna.....	50 00
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Hunt, R. M.....	25 00	White, Horace.....	10 00
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15 Cooper Union.

Telephone: Spring, 676.

BUSINESS MEN, Contractors, Manufacturers and Farmers furnished with help. The Bureau is **not a charity, but a business enterprise.** Only applicants with **first class references**, which have been so proved by a **conscientious investigation**, will be recommended to employers. The **idle, vicious or physically incapable** will be **severely let alone** by the Bureau, to be handled by other reformatory or charitable agencies.

NO FEE TO EMPLOYER OR EMPLOYEE.

IT is not the idea of the Bureau to place a **worthless class**, but to send the very **best material** for **each** position, in order that each man placed may be the means of opening up the way for another.

All communications regarding the Bureau should be sent to

J. W. KELGAARD, Supt.

15 Cooper Union, New York.

Send for Circular of Information.

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R. E. TAYLOR,

Supt.
